



# News Release

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**Make sure your child is protected *and* prepared this school year**  
*Protect children from routine and new vaccine-preventable diseases*

**OLYMPIA** — Back-to-school time is just around the corner for Washington children. As new diseases surface around the globe, it's more important than ever for kids to be fully immunized.

Childhood vaccinations are among the most effective ways to protect children against serious and preventable illnesses, some of which have no cure or treatment. Parents should use the next several weeks to ensure their kids have all the immunizations they need to begin school. Parents also should schedule a yearly health checkup for children, and have them get any other immunizations that are due.

"Parents want their kids to be healthy and safe," said State Health Officer Dr. Maxine Hayes, a pediatrician. "Make sure they're protected *and* prepared this school year by getting them vaccinated."

There have been outbreaks of measles, chickenpox, and whooping cough in our state in the past year. There have also been cases of swine flu (H1N1) in Washington and around the world. Federal swine flu vaccination recommendations are expected to be issued soon.

"There's been a lot of news coverage about disease outbreaks this year, and it's hard to predict what will happen in the coming months," said Dr. Hayes. "It's more important than ever to make sure your kids are up to date on their immunizations as they head back to school."

Several immunizations are required before children can attend school and child care. Students entering sixth and seventh grades must get the tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (Tdap) vaccine. This booster shot protects older kids against whooping cough (pertussis). Young children receive a vaccine that prevents the same diseases, but protection starts to wear off in the early teen years, so Tdap is important for preteens.

—More—

Kids starting second, third, and sixth grades must get one dose of the chickenpox (varicella) vaccine or document that they've had the disease. Kindergarteners and first-graders need two doses of the vaccine. Parent-reported history of chickenpox is not an acceptable alternative for kids entering kindergarten and first grade.

Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine is not required for preteen girls, but it is recommended. Be sure to bring your insurance card to your child's appointment, as kids with private health insurance are no longer eligible for state-funded HPV vaccine. The state continues to purchase HPV vaccine for low-income girls up to age 19.

Although exemptions are allowed for medical, religious, or personal reasons, the best disease protection is to make sure children have all recommended immunizations. Children who are not fully immunized may be excluded from attending school, preschool, or child care if a disease outbreak occurs.

Health care providers can use the CHILD Profile Immunization Registry to help parents complete the necessary school entry paperwork by printing it directly from the registry. Parents should request their child's shot records a month before school and use their regular health care providers for all childhood vaccinations when possible.

For help finding a health care provider or an immunization clinic, call your [local health agency](#) ([www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/LHJMap/LHJMap.htm)) or the [WithinReach](#) ([www.withinreachwa.org](http://www.withinreachwa.org)) Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588.

[Required vaccine](#) information (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/schools/vaccine.htm>) is available online. The [CHILD Profile Immunization Registry](#) ([www.childprofile.org](http://www.childprofile.org)) has information on the immunization registry program. [Swine flu information](#) is also available (<http://www.doh.wa.gov/swineflu/default.htm>) on the department's Web site.

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